is as tiresome as it is false. Even the Supreme Court has never held that obscenity as such is constitutionally protected. Next cliché: "Who is to say what is 'obscene'?" Common sense, that's who. The word "indecent" may be hard to define, but even liberals don't want to extend the First Amendment to the man who pulls down his pants in Central Park and is arrested for "indecent exposure."

In an attack on the Meese Commission in *Playboy*, Robert Scheer asserts that "the attempt to define pornography" is "futile." Well, here's a working definition: Pornography is that the failure of which to appear in *Playboy* would result in the magazine's collapse, no matter how brilliant those articles for which so many males insist they buy it. A few paragraphs later Scheer adds that "in my view, all child pornography is foul, and society has an overriding obligation to protect minors." In our view, good. But Scheer doesn't explain how you can define child pornography without defining pornography. Maybe Hef has the answer.

Biting the Bullet

MICKEY KAUS, identified as *The New Republic*'s West Coast correspondent, has an article in the July 7 issue of *TNR* that seems to be intellectually decisive on the subject of welfare. His analysis is superb, though his conclusions are not inevitable.

Kaus begins with what has now become an accepted datum, that there is a "culture of poverty," a nation-within-a-nation, a kind of Third World colony in the United States. It is sustained in large part by the federal AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children) program, the program that pays women for having children out of wedlock. In the culture AFDC subsidizes, Kaus correctly observes, families just don't get formed. It corrupts the women, and it corrupts the men who sire their children.

Kaus recognizes that the culture of poverty has to be abolished, and work is the prescription. He analyzes the various programs now in place that attempt to achieve that end. The much-touted Employment and Training Choices program (ET, for short) in Massachusetts merely scratches the surface. A complex new "workfare" program is going into place in California, but Kaus is correct in thinking that it will not seriously cut into the culture of poverty. Under the California plan, if you don't want to work, you really don't have to.

"Only work works," says Kaus, in what may be one of the great formulations. His recommendation is that we abolish AFDC and provide jobs for the inhabitants of the poverty culture. No work, no eat. They would fill potholes, rake leaves, wash dishes; whatever. They would also have to get to work on time, expressing at least minimal responsibility. Kaus wants to destroy the culture of poverty through a kind of huge WPA, price tag unknowable, maybe around $60 billion.

This is an intellectually challenging proposal: one that might work.

But there is another idea, courtesy of Charles Murray, called cold turkey. AFDC could just be wiped off the books, and the erstwhile recipients could read the want-ads. Realistically, he adds, "Many ghetto men, at least initially, will prefer the world of crime, hustle, and odd jobs to working for 'chump change.' " Well, let them, and then see what happens.

It is certainly an interesting debate, and conceivably a crucial one. Kaus's $60-billion WPA solution could be called "conservative," given the social costs of what we are alternatively facing. It is also possible that we should simply wipe AFDC off the books and try cold turkey. The admirable Mr. Kaus says that he does not have the "stomach" for that answer. But that is hardly an argument.

Bienvenidos a California

Though California once belonged
To Habsburgs in Madrid
And missionaries told about
El Niño and El Cid,
Since 1848, the folks
Thought it was crystal-clear
That though gazpacho is the soup,
English is spoken here.

W. H. VON DREELE

Morris Abram, Well Done

MORRIS ABRAM has quit his post as vice chairman (and dominant figure) of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. He will be too much absorbed, he says, by his new post as chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

Abram deserves the gratitude of those who saw him vilified, in the Eighties, for standing by the same views he stood by during the long decade that preceded the promulgation of civil rights for black citizens in the Sixties. His line then was as clear as Hubert Humphrey's: The Constitution calls for ignoring race. Now, the recent history of race relations is relevant in evaluating the motives of local governors. If there is redistricting in an area historically committed to segregation, the presumption is with the redistricters that the motives are not racist. All these distinctions Morris Abram was always careful to make, but it did not matter: The Jacobins went after him, and by the time they were through dumping on him one

would have thought his background and that of Senator Bilbo were identical.

Slowly, the distinction between affirmative action meaning help for the handicapped and affirmative action meaning mechanical quotas irrespective of achievement is making its way into the consciousness of the distinction-makers. The Supreme Court, with its waffling on affirmative action and its wrongheaded decision last week (see below), has a ways to go, but there is reason to hope that clarity on the subject will come in the Rehnquist Court. When it does, much of the credit should go to Morris Abram.

Does America Hate Whites?

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION, as it is currently being used, is quite simply wrong—wrong because it is anti-white. It seeks to wipe out the effects of past discrimination through . . . discrimination. A white male American would be justified in judging that the Supreme Court, in upholding the constitutionality of reverse discrimination, has nullified the social contract.

The federal judiciary ought to have its portrait painted by Jackson Pollock. We have been instructed by it that the New York sheet-metal workers' union must have 29.23 per cent black and Hispanic workers. As Oscar Wilde remarked, you would have to have a heart of stone to read of the death of Little Nell without laughing.

Though she voted with the Court majority in this case, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor is visibly nervous. "I write separately," she said, "to emphasize that the Court's holding is a narrow one . . . Non-minority employees therefore remain free to challenge the race-conscious measures contemplated by a proposed consent decree as violative of their rights under Section 703 or the Fourteenth Amendment. Even if non-minority employees do not object to the consent decree, a court should not approve a consent decree that on its face provides for racially preferential treatment that would clearly violate Section 703 or the Fourteenth Amendment."

Yes indeed. There may be light at the end of this particular tunnel. But why, to shift tropes, does Justice O'Connor not get her intellectual ducks in a row?

¿Reciprocity, Anyone?

IN CHANGING the immigration laws, Congress might want to consider proposals requiring that:

—the applicant for permanent residence prove his possession of an outside income sufficient to support him and his dependents;

—he present character references from two or more citizens;

—he be given, upon payment of a stiff fee, a certificate, with photograph, fingerprints, place of residence, etc., identifying him as a probationary immigrant;

—this certificate be renewed annually, for a fee, providing that the bearer's conduct in the interim has been unobjectionable;

—dates of all trips abroad will be entered in the certificate, which will be canceled if the bearer is absent for more than one year;

—after five years, upon payment of still another stiff fee, the certificate will be made permanent and the bearer becomes a non-voting resident alien;

—the certificate, however, is cancelable without explanation, and with no provision for appeal, at the pleasure of the government;

—no provision will be made for a resident alien to become a citizen except by direct individual proclamation by the President.

These provisions may be considered harsh, especially by people critical of the relatively mild requirements in pending legislation, but the government of Mexico considers them both fair and prudent. They are, in fact, precisely the terms on which Americans are allowed to live in Mexico, and they are rigidly enforced.

Becker

NO DOUBT about it, Boris Becker is a phenomenon, winning the Wimbledon men's singles title for the second time at age 18, having been, last year, the youngest player ever to win it.

Becker possesses extraordinary physical strength, and he has gained in agility. His serve has been clocked at 160 miles per hour: Not much you can do about that except wait for him to lose concentration. In the Wimbledon final, Becker completely dominated Ivan Lendl, a good player who could not, on that day, seem to get into contention.

Is Boris Becker among the tennis immortals? We shall see. Fate in the form of John McEnroe awaits him at the U.S. Open in August. McNasty, Superbrat, is not everyone's favorite personality, but he can do more things with a tennis ball than anyone else since Rod Laver. Jimmy Connors, playing with a pulled muscle, was knocked out early at Wimbledon, but he has the best return of service in the game. Things are getting interesting.

John East, RIP

SOME TIME DURING the evening of June 28, at his home, after returning to North Carolina following a busy week in Congress, United States Senator John East died, apparently committing suicide in the throes of deep depression brought on by hypothyroidism. In the thirty years since his career as a young officer